

End Domestic Abuse: In the Wake of Green Bay Shooting, End Abuse Identifies Gender-Based Violence as Public Health Crisis

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Green Bay – On May 1, Bruce Pofahl – a 62 year-old white man – shot and killed two people and injured a third before being fatally shot by police at the Duck Creek Kitchen and Bar at the Radisson Oneida Nation hotel, casino, and conference center just west of Green Bay. While full details have not been released surrounding the gunman’s motivation or target, it is [confirmed](#) that Pofahl’s former supervisor at the restaurant, Elizabeth Walker, had taken out a harassment restraining order against him in March, and that an injunction without firearm restriction was granted.

“Gender-based violence, which takes many forms including harassment, workplace violence, stalking, and domestic violence, must be understood for what it is: a community issue that requires community-based solutions,” said End Abuse Executive Director Grisel Santiago-Rivera. “It is too often dismissed as a personal or private matter, and known patterns that predict future violence are ignored by those with power to prevent harm. This recent tragedy demonstrates the far-reaching ramifications of not addressing root causes of violence. Once again, the legal system has failed a community by not appropriately addressing misogyny. Once again, a white man with access to a firearm has stolen lives. We must take seriously the evidence-based signs that indicate potential for escalation and homicide. Had the granted injunction, for example, included a firearm restriction, we may not be witnessing violence at this scale.”

Advocates at Wise Women Gathering Place, a Green Bay gender-based violence program offering Native American culturally-specific services to any person harmed by violence, addresses the impact of gender-based violence in their everyday work. “Every restraining order without firearm restrictions is alarming because the safety of the petitioner is significantly more compromised, especially with domestic violence and harassment because the first time can be deadly,” said Beverly Scow, Wise Women Assistant Director. “People seeking protection from domestic violence need it from every source: police, service providers, and the court.”

While research examining the connections between domestic violence, misogyny, white supremacy, and mass shootings is severely limited, analysis of recent mass shootings indicates shooters often had histories of domestic violence, stalking, or harassment. The [recent analysis](#) of 749 mass shootings between 2014-2019 by Bloomberg News found that in about 60% of cases, the shooter had a history of domestic violence. According to the End Abuse [2019 Domestic Violence Homicide Report](#), firearms are the leading tool in domestic violence homicides in WI, and patterns identified in cases of domestic violence homicide carry over into other forms of gender-based violence, including harassment. The latest End Abuse [Legislative Agenda](#) advocates for common sense firearm restrictions, and urges lawmakers to pass legislation that recognizes the gravity of allowing those with histories of gender-based violence access to firearms, which are used against victims as both threat and murder weapon.

“To address the community issue of gender-based violence and prevent tragedies like this, we advocate for the redistribution of resources from law enforcement and carceral systems that fail those experiencing gender-based violence,” said Santiago-Rivera. “Shifting funds toward community-based transformative justice programming, mutual aid networks, and primary prevention initiatives will promote safer, healthier, and more just communities across our state. It is only through meaningful change to our legal and public policy systems, alongside shifting to community-based solutions, that we can hope to never put another family member, loved one, or community member in the path of such deep loss and violence.”